

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight in support of the Biden administration's new guidance regarding the Packers and Stockyards Act, and heartened that the administration took swift and decisive action to protect small farmers and local producers. Too often, local farmers suffer economically at the expense of large integrators that practice oppressive tactics in the marketplace and thwart the ability of small producers to flourish.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed great frailties in our food supply chains. And while Americans are paying higher prices, 14 percent on beef, 12 percent on pork, and 6.6 percent on poultry, the country's top four largest meat processors have increasingly gained the lion's share of the market since the 1970s. They control the entire market, the largest producers.

Meanwhile, poultry giants Tysons and Purdue recently settled a \$35 million lawsuit in which local contract growers cited the combination of low wages and the financial demands of compliance with the companies' barn standards that unjustly pushed them into a debtor's prison.

The action taken by the administration will help smaller farmers stand strong, achieve fair contracts, and come forward to speak their truth, without the fear and threat of retaliation.

Congratulations to the Biden administration for doing something that is fair and just.

HIGHLIGHTING THE BENEFITS OF HYDROPOWER

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I speak tonight about the advocacy and the positives we have of hydroelectric dams in my home State and in our country. They provide hydroelectric power, which is green power, which is renewable power. Yet, that seems to be forgotten these days when they are more and more trying to remove hydroelectric dams from our grid.

It is clean power; it is available 24 hours a day. You don't have to wait for the sun to come up or wind to blow.

Hydroelectric dams have several multiple use purposes, such as storing water for people or for agriculture. That water is available for dipping out of when you have aircraft that need to get water supply for fighting forest fires like we have over a million acres of in my home State, in Northern California.

Water transfers can help with the wildlife; with helping to have switches so that they can have water for aquatic species, for swapping during the year.

So why are we wanting to remove hydroelectric dams?

In California, we even have issues with having to shut off power usage, what is called flex alerts. What is even

funnier is that you have shut them off from 3 to 9 p.m. on charging your electric car.

So we should utilize our hydroelectric dams and all the multiple positive uses they have, and not tear them out, like on the Klamath Basin.

HUMANITARIAN HAITIAN IMMIGRANT RELIEF

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I want the Haitian community in America and in the United States to know that we have not forgotten them.

Haiti has been a strong ally of the United States that, unfortunately, has been caught in the quagmire of destructive poverty and, of course, governments that sometimes have not worked. Recently, they experienced a horrific earthquake; 800,000 people homeless.

So now that we see Haitians by the thousands coming to our border, we have an obligation not to deport them. We have an obligation to provide the potential review that comes about by having the number of immigration personnel to determine their status. We have an obligation for humanitarian relief.

I know our borders are closed; I recognize that. But I also know that there is opportunity for asylum through credible fear, and there is also an opportunity to deal with whether or not these individuals have family members.

Let me simply say, Madam Speaker, the question we have now is sending these Haitians to a country that is so impoverished and violent is not the right way to go. Let's work together to do it right.

HONORING THE LIVES OF COACH GUY THOMAS AND COACH MARK MCGARITY

(Mr. DONALDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DONALDS. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the lives of Coach Guy Thomas and Coach Mark McGarity, two beloved track and field coaches of the Southwest Florida community who both passed away on July 13 of this year.

Coach Guy Thomas tragically passed away after being hospitalized in critical condition after contracting COVID-19. A track and field coach at Dunbar High School, Mr. Thomas dedicated his life to training and mentoring our young athletes on the field. A highly respected coach, Mr. Thomas led his team to numerous Lee County Athletic Conference wins and coached multiple State champions.

Retired Coach Mark McGarity also lost his life to a battle with cancer. Mr. McGarity served the Collier County

community as a coach and teacher for 38 years, and for 15 years served as the cross country and track coach at Lely High School.

I am proud that the State of Florida has access to such esteemed and beloved educators that allow our youth to flourish, both in the classroom and on the field.

As the Representative for Florida's 19th Congressional District, it is my honor to stand here today celebrating the lives of two Americans who dedicated themselves to bettering our youth and serving as role models to the Southwest Florida community.

HONORING THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN AFGHANISTAN

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, tonight we paid tribute to the 13 fallen American military who died as Afghanistan was being abandoned by this administration to the Taliban, who are now more powerful than they have ever been, have more equipment than they ever had.

What we didn't pay tribute to tonight—it somehow got lost in the shuffle—is over 2,400 of our precious military lives that were lost fighting for their country in Afghanistan. They kept us safe, relatively safe for 20 years. But they should not be forgotten.

There are over 1,800 civilian contractors that were killed. There were 600 military killed in Afghanistan under Commander in Chief Bush; 1,800 under Commander in Chief Obama. They should not be forgotten. They served their country.

□ 1945

BUILDING AMERICA BACK BETTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. NEWMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to be representing the Congressional Black Caucus as the Special Order chair.

I want to thank our chairwoman, JOYCE BEATTY, for her leadership on ensuring that the message of the Congressional Black Caucus—Our Power, Our Message—is reflected on the floor of this House and to the American people, to our constituents, the millions and millions of Americans that the 57 members of the Congressional Black Caucus represent.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, it is clear that we will be dealing with Build Back Better for the time of this week and into next week, so the Congressional Black Caucus will come very briefly this week to discuss and let our constituents and Americans know that any distorted representation of the \$3.5 trillion, as not being able to afford it or that it is too extensive, is really a misrepresentation.

First of all, we support, as the Congressional Black Caucus, Build Back Better enthusiastically. It is a \$3.5 trillion package over 10 years for a country that is nearing 350 million people, a country that has not seen infrastructure investment, climate investment, investment to deal with electric cars, investment to deal with the new economy, the care economy—we have not seen this for decades, or at least we have not seen this as we have moved into the 21st century.

The Build Back Better plan makes the transformative investments that we need to continue our growing economy, lower costs for working families, and position the United States as a global leader in the innovation and jobs of the future.

The \$3.5 trillion gross investment will build on the successes of the American Rescue Plan and set our Nation on a path of fiscal responsibility and broadly shared prosperity for generations to come.

Almost 4 years ago, in 2017, the Houston area and most of the Southern region, all the way to Florida, including some of our Commonwealths, experienced Hurricane Harvey.

This is my district, where the water looked like an extended ocean—\$155 billion worth of damage, so much damage that we are continuing to work with it. Why? Because we did not have the infrastructure. We did not have the bayous that were constructed in a way that would hold the water. So much damage, so much loss, so much pain.

So a combination of the INVEST Act and Build Back Better is a must. They must walk hand-in-hand. One without the other does not answer the call of the American people. It does not reflect the Lincolnian attitude that we all are in this together.

Let me read a quote from President Lincoln, who reminds us so much whenever we speak of the idea of what America is. Abraham Lincoln, in 1862, as he was seeing the divide coming into this Nation, offered these words: “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.”

As we move forward with Build Back Better and the INVEST Act, the \$3.5

trillion and the \$1 trillion, there is no time to isolate ourselves as one or I or me. This is a time when we stand with America as we, working to ensure that this magnificent contribution to the infrastructure—to some of the worst infrastructure problems, from dams to highways to the electric grid—can also stand alongside childcare and the care economy.

For example, in the State of Texas, this bill would help the local economy. It would send more than \$400 million in Texas to support the expansion of an electric vehicle charging network, with up to \$2.5 billion more available through grants.

Texas would also receive \$3 billion to improve pipes and the delivery of clean drinking water so needed in our State, in urban and rural communities.

And Texas would benefit from the bill's \$3.5 billion investment in weatherizing energy grids across the country. Millions of Texans who sat shivering in their dark living rooms during the last winter's freeze will undoubtedly welcome that improvement. We lost over 150 people in that short span in February when we saw temperatures in Texas that we had never imagined. People literally froze in their beds. One comes to mind that is so emotional: An 11-year-old boy froze in his bed in February 2021.

Critically, the bill would provide at least \$100 million for broadband access in a State where 14 percent of households don't have an internet subscription, and 4 percent of Texans have no broadband infrastructure at all.

My view is that we cannot simply go for one versus the other. Let me just tell you about the Build Back Better \$3.5 trillion bill.

It will provide childcare to help our workforce and contribute to the economy where that is needed. Therefore, the plan supports families in need of childcare, providing access to safe, reliable, high-quality childcare, delivered by well-trained childcare providers.

As it relates to education, we will be productive and having our children have high-quality education. That is why this plan makes necessary investments to increase quality education by 4 years for all students at no cost to hardworking parents. The plan will provide 2 years of free pre-K and 2 years of free community college. We are investing in people.

In regard to healthcare, too many Americans are forced to choose between medical care and putting food on the table. The plan expands access to quality, affordable healthcare by strengthening the Medicare, Medicaid, and Affordable Care marketplace programs that millions of Americans rely on. But now more could be added, in addition to providing dental, hearing, and vision benefits. That is when we go it together. Not I's and me's, but we, us together.

Paid leave that can help us get on our feet when we are having issues with family and healthcare.

Tackling the climate crisis. We have seen the ravages of hurricanes. We have seen Hurricane Ida—devastation that is unspeakable, electricity that people do not have, a million people without electricity. The climate crisis and climate change are here. It is crucial that we begin to invest in a plan that empowers comprehensive action to build an equitable, clean energy economy with historic investments to transform and modernize the electricity sector. It is imperative that we do that.

We must take a moment to pause and to recognize that any positive steps on climate will be because of us, because of the most powerful lawmaking body in the Nation, taking a moment to pause and realistically confronting it, providing the research dollars, working with universities, such as the University of Houston Energy Institute and Texas Southern University, looking at ways to provide the best approach to a green approach and climate response as well as providing the necessary research on new kinds of energy. That is what we need to do.

Just for a moment, may I step back to the point about healthcare. We know it all too well in Houston. We were the poster child in Texas for the most uninsured persons when the Affordable Care Act was implemented. Six million people, 25 percent of the State of Texas, were uninsured. We still do not have access to healthcare as we should.

Then to add this horrific burden and insult to the women of Texas, to write the most heinous bill that would, in fact, disallow a woman's access to healthcare, this horrible bill that would have a bounty hunter that would seek to follow you in the midst of you getting good healthcare. I think this is clearly an unfortunate set of circumstances that we should correct.

Healthcare, your own personal decision with your provider, your faith, and your family, choices that no one wants to make, yet this State law was put in place to create a vigilante community to attack women and those that might help them provide access to healthcare. That is what it is, access to healthcare, a decision that no one offers to make lightly. But here we are, a vigilante being enticed by \$10,000—gossip, spying, standing outside dorm rooms, watching Uber cars, standing in front of doctors' offices, standing in front of organizations like Planned Parenthood that deal with healthcare for women, and just plain providing a sense of intimidation and fear.

That brings me to the legislation that we hope that we will see passing, H.R. 5226, Preventing Vigilante Stalking that Stops Women's Access to Healthcare and Abortion Rights Act of 2021. I hope my colleagues will join me in a simple bill that simply says you don't have the right to stalk a woman who is seeking healthcare. It may be that she is going for a mammogram. You don't know. But by creating this

atmosphere of money being given to a whole industry of people, ne'er-do-wells and others, some with good intentions in their mind but seeking to make profit on someone else's pain, that is unacceptable. I hope my colleagues will join me in that legislation.

Healthcare is a right, and we should give that to families, to women, to men, to children, and to seniors. That is what building America back better will do.

Affordable housing, helping homeless persons, tax cuts for families and workers, I am so grateful. And I want everybody to know how Democrats worked so hard for the child tax credit—excuse me, let me correct that—the child tax cut. In fact, as I hear it, my constituents, your constituents, their constituents, are receiving those child tax cuts right now. Many people are making ends meet, helping their children get into school.

That is what Democrats do, and that is what this bill is going to do—research, development, and innovation on good, forward-thinking infrastructure.

Working with HBCUs, helping them be historically relevant but also helping them to be stronger in terms of their infrastructure. I support that and thank one of our colleagues, Congresswoman ALMA ADAMS, who has been a leader on making sure our HBCUs are front and center, are surviving. These are our historic colleges founded in the 1800s.

□ 2000

Immigration, of course, is a very important issue, and I might say, another issue that we worked on in the Judiciary Committee with our allotment of \$107 billion, and that is, of course, community violence intervention. We put in \$2.5 billion on community violence intervention. And that of course was \$107 billion, \$107.5 billion in Judiciary. Part of that, of course, was to deal with the issue of community violence intervention.

So you can see there is no time to waste. There is no time to delay. There is only time to work hard on getting this legislation passed. We must do it as an INVEST Act, we must do it as a budget reconciliation, or the Build Back Better Act of 2021, the better name. We must do it together.

The Congressional Black Caucus stands to be able to say, “No more Hurricane Harveys,” but more, work with communities, rebuilding streets, historic preservation, and making a difference. That is what historic infrastructure investment can do, and that is what we in the Congressional Black Caucus stand for.

I look forward to us continuing our discussion. Madam Speaker, I take the opportunity at this point in the name of unity, reconciliation, a new pathway for transformational government, passing of the INVEST Act, passing of the Build Back Better Act, and making sure that we have voting rights, that

we give women the right to choose, that we pass H.R. 40, the commission to study slavery and develop reparation proposals. A long agenda. I know that we can do this in the spirit of unity.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, I yield back the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, as a senior member of the Committees on the Judiciary, on Homeland Security, and on the Budget, and the Congressional Black Caucus, I am pleased to co-anchor this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order with my colleague, the distinguished gentleman from New York, Congressman RITCHIE TORRES.

I thank the Chair of the CBC, Congresswoman BEATTY of Ohio, for organizing this Special Order to discuss the reasons why the CBC strongly supports the Build Back Better Agenda conceived and advanced by President Biden and House Democrats to support visionary and transformative investments in the health, well-being, and financial security of America's workers and families.

Over the next hour, several of our colleagues will share their perspectives on why it is essential that we “go big” in building back better to our nation and all of its people have the opportunities and resources to compete and win in the changing global economy of the 21st century.

Madam Speaker, it is often said that the federal budget is an expression of the nation's values and the investments made to Build America Back Better are a clear declaration of congressional Democrats' commitment to ensuring that our government, our economy, and our systems work For The People.

Madam Speaker, these long-overdue investments in America's future will be felt in every corner of the country and across every sector of the American life, building on the success of the American Rescue Plan, accommodating historic infrastructure investments in the legislative pipeline, and addressing longstanding deficits in our communities by ending an era of chronic underinvestment so we can emerge from our current crises a stronger, more equitable nation.

Should our friends across the aisle join us in this endeavor, it would send a powerful signal to the American people if our colleagues across the aisle would join us in this effort because nothing would better show them that their elected representatives can set partisanship aside and put America first.

And that bipartisan achievement would portend success for similar initiatives in the area of strengthening the infrastructure of democracy in which every American has a vital interest, national and homeland security, and criminal justice and immigration reform.

I would urge my Republican colleagues to heed the words of Republican Governor Jim Justice of West Virginia who said colorfully several months ago:

At this point in time in this nation, we need to go big. We need to quit counting the egg-sucking legs on the cows and count the cows and just move. And move forward and move right now.

The same sentiment was expressed more eloquently by Abraham Lincoln in 1862 when he memorably wrote:

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must

rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

Madam Speaker, the bipartisan action we took in February 2021 when we passed the American Rescue Plan was a giant step in the right direction, but it was a targeted response to the immediate and urgent public health and economic crises; it was not a long-term solution to many of the pressing challenges facing our nation that have built up over decades of disinvestment in our nation and its people in every region and sector of the country.

We simply can no longer afford the costs of neglect and inaction; the time to act is now.

The Build Back Better Plan makes the transformative investments that we need to continue growing our economy, lower costs for working families, and position the United States as a global leader in innovation and the jobs of the future.

This \$3.5 trillion gross investment will build on the successes of the American Rescue Plan and set our nation on a path of fiscal responsibility and broadly shared prosperity for generations to come.

The Build Back Better Plan will provide resources to improve our education, health, and child care systems, invest in clean energy and sustainability, address the housing crisis, and more; all while setting America up to compete and win in the decades ahead.

The Build Back Better Plan is paid for by ensuring that the wealthy and big corporations are paying their fair share and Americans making less than \$400,000 a year will not see their taxes increase by a penny.

Let me repeat that: No American making less than \$400,000 a year will not see their taxes increase by a penny.

In sum, Madam Speaker, the investments made by the Build Back Better Plan will expand opportunity for all and build an economy powered by shared prosperity and inclusive growth.

No one is better prepared or more experienced to lead the American renaissance that will be produced by the investments made by the Build Back Better Plan than President Biden, the architect of the American Rescue Plan and who as Vice-President during the Obama Administration oversaw the implementation of the Recovery Act, which saved millions of jobs and rescued our economy from the Great Recession the nation inherited from a previous Republican administration.

And let us not forget that President Obama also placed his confidence in his vice-president to oversee the rescue of the automotive industry, which he did so well that the American car industry fully recovered its status as the world leader.

Madam Speaker, let me briefly highlight some of the key investments made by the Build Back Better Plan:

EDUCATION

The Plan will provide two years of free pre-K and two years of free community college to ensure every student has the tools, resources, and opportunity to succeed in life.

It will also invest in our teachers and institutions that serve minority students and provide funding to give school buildings long-overdue infrastructure updates.

Children lead happier, healthier, and more productive lives when they have had access to high-quality education and that is why the

Build Back Better Plan makes necessary investments to increase quality education by four years for all students at no cost to hard-working families.

HEALTH CARE

The Build Back Better Plan expands access to quality, affordable health care by strengthening the Medicare, Medicaid, and Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace programs that millions of Americans already rely on.

It includes a major new expansion of Medicare benefits, adding a dental, hearing, and vision benefit to the program for the very first time.

It strengthens the ACA by extending the enhanced Marketplace subsidies that were included in the American Rescue Plan.

It also provides an affordable coverage option for the more than two million Americans living in states that have not expanded Medicaid under the ACA and do not earn enough to qualify for Marketplace subsidies.

The Build Back Better Plan's investment in home- and community-based services will increase access to critical services and create new and better-paying jobs for care providers.

When the Build Back Better Plan is fully implemented soon gone will be the terrible old days when too many Americans are forced to choose between medical care and putting food on the table or affording other necessities.

CHILD CARE

The Build Back Better Plan supports families in need of child care by providing access to safe, reliable, and high-quality care delivered by a well-trained child care workforce.

This is important because our nation is strongest when everyone can join the workforce and contribute to the economy.

That is why this investment is vital to so many millions of—especially women—who are often forced to choose between working to support their family or caring for their family.

PAID LEAVE

Madam Speaker, the United States is the richest nation in the world but one of the few modern democracies that lacks a paid leave program.

The Build Back Better Plan remedies this shameful failing by creating a national, comprehensive paid family and medical leave program, providing direct support to workers and families.

This crucial investment will allow workers to take the time they need to bond with a new child, care for their own serious illness, or care for a seriously ill loved one without risking needed income or employment.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In the area of housing, the Build Back Better Plan makes investments to ensure that Americans have access to safe and affordable housing by providing resources to increase housing vouchers and funding for tribal housing.

It also supports investments in programs that will help address our nation's housing crisis by increasing the supply of affordable homes for those in need and investing in historically underserved communities and those that have been previously left behind.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

The Build Back Better Plan will spur and empower comprehensive action to build an equitable clean energy economy with historic investments to transform and modernize the electricity sector, lower energy costs for Amer-

icans, improve air quality and public health, create good-paying jobs, and strengthen U.S. competitiveness—all while putting our country on the pathway to 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2035.

The Build Back Better Plan extends and expands clean energy tax credits and supports clean electricity performance payments so utilities can accelerate progress toward a clean electric grid at no added cost to consumers.

The Build Back Better Plan invests in clean energy, efficiency, electrification, and climate justice through grants, consumer rebates, and federal procurement of clean power and sustainable materials, and by incentivizing private sector development and investment.

Another exciting aspect of the Build Back Better Plan, Madam Speaker, is that it will drive economic opportunities, environmental conservation, and climate resilience—especially in underserved and disadvantaged communities—including through a new Civilian Climate Corps.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Madam Speaker, advances in science, technology, and manufacturing are creating the industries and jobs of the future, and we must ensure that they are created here.

That is why the Build Back Better Plan invests in America's ingenuity and competitiveness by revitalizing state-of-the-art laboratory facilities and research across the nation, including at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs), through new regional innovation hubs, and through federal science agencies.

The Build Back Better Plan will reinvigorate U.S. manufacturing by supporting supply chain resilience and modernization, Manufacturing USA institutes, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and facilities and research at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, all of which will strengthen America's competitiveness in the global economy.

IMMIGRATION

Madam Speaker, as virtually every respected study has concluded, providing a pathway to lawful permanent resident (LPR) status for Dreamers, recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), farmworkers, and essential workers will be a boon for our economy.

This Plan allows for investments to provide a pathway to LPR status for these immigrant communities.

Madam Speaker, immigrants eligible for such protection are an integral part of Texas's social fabric.

Texas is home to 386,300 immigrants who are eligible for protection, 112,000 of whom reside in Harris County.

These individuals live with 845,300 family members and among those family members, 178,700 are U.S.-born citizen children.

These persons in Texas who are eligible for protection under the bill arrived in the United States at the average age of 8 and on average have lived in the United States since 1996.

They own 43,500 homes in Texas and pay \$340,500,000 in annual mortgage payments and contribute \$2,234,800,000 in federal taxes and \$1,265,200,000 in state and local taxes each year.

Annually, these households generate \$10,519,000,000 in spending power in Texas and help power the national economy.

TAX CUTS FOR FAMILIES AND WORKERS

The expansion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) enacted in the American Rescue Plan has already benefitted nearly 66 million children, put money in the pockets of millions of hard-working parents and guardians, and is expected to help cut child poverty by more than half.

The Build Back Better Plan not only extends this meaningful tax cut, but it also extends the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the expanded Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, which help families make ends meet and put food on the table, reduce child poverty, and lessen the burden on hard-working Americans so they can provide a better future for America's children.

REINING IN PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

The Build Back Better Plan also achieves savings from following through on President Biden's call to give Medicare the power to negotiate lower prescription drug prices, saving money for patients as well as the federal government.

Madam Speaker, we have before us a once in a century opportunity to make gigantic progress in making ours a more perfect union, and to do it in a single bound with enactment of the Build Back Better Plan, the most transformative legislation passed by this Congress since the Great Society and the New Deal.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank Chairwoman BEATTY and the Congressional Black Caucus for hosting this Special Order Hour on our priorities in the budget reconciliation and infrastructure negotiation processes, and thank Congresswoman JACKSON LEE and Congressman TORRES for facilitating it.

First, let me be very clear: I am certainly no fan of the partisanship and complexity associated with the reconciliation process. In an ideal world, in a perfect situation, this process would be defined by bipartisan agreements and give-and-take, and would be negotiated in a gradual, more transparent manner. But we do not live in an ideal world, nor is this a perfect situation. Right now, as we stand here today, millions of Americans are suffering, our infrastructure is crumbling, and our planet is quite literally on fire.

Now, Madam Speaker, I have served in this body for nearly 30 years—but I find myself struggling to recall a time when the cost of inaction was as high and as dangerous as it is in this moment. That's why the Black Caucus, under the leadership of Chairwoman BEATTY, has fought to include vital provisions in the Build Back Better Act that would transform our economy and infrastructure, provide relief from Americans still reeling from the effects of COVID-19, and form a blueprint for a more equitable, just society.

It's why I, as a Senior Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, voted to pass the portion of the Build Back Better Act dealing with investments in our nation's transportation and infrastructure systems. The most salient, underlying themes contained in the bill include investments in a race equitable transportation system, climate resiliency, transit programs targeted to residents in disadvantaged communities, resources for railroads, port infrastructure and supply chain resilience, and our water infrastructure, to name a few.

It's why I, as Chair of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, presided

over a markup of the portion of the Build Back Better Act dealing with the issues and agencies under our jurisdiction. We targeted giving our nation's scientists and engineers 21st century facilities to conduct research by investing billions of dollars into research infrastructure at the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. These vital investments will also lead to good, high-paying jobs. We also invested billions of dollars into our innovation pipeline at our premier research agencies to power our research and development and our advanced manufacturing programs. This includes significant investments in minority-serving institutions and diversity programs at NSF and DOE. Finally, we funded billions of dollars to better understand and respond to the climate crisis. Included in this is vital funding to improve our understanding of climate-associated natural disasters like hurricanes, flooding, and wildfires.

Madam Speaker, I would urge all of my colleagues—Republican and Democrat, progressive and conservative, and everyone in between—to support these critical, much-needed investments in our constituents, in our districts, and in our country as a whole.

THREE IMPORTANT ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, we are back from our August break, and there are three issues of tremendous importance that Congress ought to deal with and the press corps ought to be dealing with.

I can understand, by the way, why President Biden wants to change his view over a few months ago and go for mandates on the vaccine, because these other issues are issues that I am sure would be uncomfortable for him to address, but they are important for the press corps and important for the American people to address.

The first issue is: the Del Rio sector of the Mexican border is out of control. We all see the 15,000 people under the bridge, but what is the consequence of that?

What is the consequence of having 2 months in a row of over 200,000 people show up at the border? The Border Patrol has to get off the border, they have to shuffle people around from the Del Rio section to the El Paso section or to the Laredo section. They have to take care of all of the unaccompanied minors coming in here, and when they do that, they cannot guard the border. Things are out of control.

Not only are the agents in that area not able to focus on the area, but things are such a disaster, we are having to bring agents off the northern border to make up for the huge problems on the southern border.

What happens? We wind up in a situation which not only are there more

got-aways, people aren't even being processed crossing the border, but we also have a situation in which more drugs are coming off the border. The American public still hasn't been told enough that in the last year we have had over 90,000 people die of drug overdoses, largely from fentanyl coming across the Mexican border, and that is what happens when you have 224 miles barely monitored.

The Haitians are being brought here or encouraged to come here by the drug gangs. Why are they able to do this? It didn't happen by coincidence that you saw all these people under the bridge last week and they weren't over there a month ago.

The Biden administration has extended the Temporary Protected Status for people coming here from Haiti. When they changed this process, it was a recruiting tool for the gangs who want more people to come here.

I am going to emphasize, Haiti is not a very nice country, but these people are not coming from Haiti. They are coming here from Chile, they are coming here from Brazil, they are coming from Venezuela. Why are they coming from these other countries? It is not because they are in danger in Chile and Brazil. They are coming here because they can make more money here, and the drug cartel gangs are explaining that to them.

These gangs are charging these Haitians at least \$50,000 a person to come here, which is the reason why they are so involved in this.

Meanwhile, where is the President? Where is our moderate Joe Biden? Where is Kamala Harris, the expert on the border, as we have this disaster going on at the southern border, out of control, people going from the United States to Mexico, back Mexico to the United States?

Wake up, press corps, and find out how much money the gangs are making on this. Why are we processing over 200,000 people at the southern border for 2 months in a row? Things we haven't seen for over 20 years.

No wonder some of the press corps, the irresponsible press corps—and no wonder Joe Biden wants to focus on vaccine mandates. Because focusing on vaccine mandates takes our eyes off the border that is out of control.

It is up to Congress to step forward, have some more committee hearings on this, do something, bring some bills to the floor. I know there is going to be a CR coming through, there is going to be a bill to break the debt ceiling coming through.

I would ask the President, the Speaker, give us some more Border Patrol agents to deal with our empty border. That is the first thing all Americans should be concerned about. They should be asking their Congressmen, they should be asking their Senators, what is being done to prevent 200,000 people from showing up at the border? What is being done when over 200 miles of the Mexican border is left, to a de-

gree, unguarded? Are they at all concerned about the 90,000 people who died in the last year of illegal drug use, primarily fentanyl flowing across the southern border? What is being done about all the people coming from the other countries?

Remember, you did not see all these people under the bridge 2 or 3 months ago. Why? Again, it is not just a random thing. It is because of a change in the Temporary Protected Status extended by President Biden, which results in the huge mess that we have.

But that is not the only thing that hasn't been covered anywhere near enough. There is an issue that the press should be focusing on more with regard to the COVID situation. I know a lot of the focus is on the vaccine, but we have to realize that many people have gotten the vaccine over the last 6 months.

We also have a situation in which people have been working on cures for the disease. Right now, most days over 1,000—kind of averaging about 1,500—people die every day from COVID. So is there any cure for COVID that the CDC is letting sit on the table?

Over a year ago scientists in Israel announced hope for a generic drug called fenofibrate, or Tricor, which has been used safely to treat people for high cholesterol for years. Recently, these Israeli scientists have revealed that they took 15 people, all of which had severe COVID, all of which needed oxygen, and in 4 days, 4 to 6 days, 14 of the 15 were out of the hospital after they were given fenofibrate, which cost a grand total of \$1.50 a day. The other patient got out of the hospital within 2 weeks.

You would think this is good news for the CDC, particularly given the billions of dollars that we have given them. Unfortunately, they are not getting enough assistance to do further trials in this country. Think if this 15-patient outfit were typical of the population as a whole. 15 for 15 cured. And not only cured. A lot of people today with COVID, even when they are cured, have permanent or almost permanent side effects. But here the side effects are a fraction of what they were on people who didn't take fenofibrate.

So I beg the CDC or anybody in the administration who is listening, we brought this to their attention before, see what you can do to have the vast sum of money and the U.S. Government weigh in to see if we can have stronger trials with more people on the fenofibrate, and we can get ourselves in a position in which soon if someone does wind up going to the hospital, if someone does wind up needing oxygen, they are given the fenofibrate, and they can wind up like the 15 patients they have already tried this on, all of which are apparently doing very well and are even getting rid of the symptoms that people who have had COVID sometimes hang onto for months and months and months.

If we have anybody out there listening from the CDC, listening from the